

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Maria Suero, I am from New Haven and I am also from the group Semilla Collective. I am in favor of H.B. 6616: AN ACT CONCERNING EXPANSION OF HUSKY HEALTH BENEFITS TO THOSE INELIGIBLE DUE TO IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY to age 26, regardless of immigration status, is an important step in ensuring that our immigrant community has access to the health care we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access to age 26; we need to open access to HUSKY and health care to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I am here fighting for health care legislation to expand HUSKY to undocumented children. My goal is to reflect on the impact of this legislation on those unnecessary, avoidable, and unjust health inequities that we are going through. We are here to fight for our rights, one of them is the health care system, which is the priority of society, because a sick society is one that does not progress.

I had a case with a friend in which I felt helpless and I could do nothing more than open my mouth and say "Don't take him to the doctor, take him to the hospital." I arrived at my friend's house and I found her struggling with a child giving him leaf tea, giving him some water, buying a digestive at the pharmacy, and when I saw all the things she had on the table I told her how long has this child been like this. Then she told me he had been like this for a week and I don't know what to do. I told her to go to the emergency room. She told me if I go to the emergency room, I will get a bill for more than three times more than what you can pay for at home. And when that bill arrives, she insisted and insisted that she would have to pay it little by little and it would take her years to pay it. At that moment I realized that many people here let their children get worse because unfortunately they do not have access to health insurance because their immigration status or their economic status does not allow it.

The priority in this country should be the health system. It is a shame that even though our countries are smaller and have fewer resources yet we have a health system at least where we can take our children to the hospital and have them checked and not be charged. I have many cases like this child's. I have a granddaughter that just yesterday her mom took her to the doctor after working in a factory standing all day and found her with a fever in the daycare center. They called me and told me that she took the child to the doctor and when she took her to the emergency doctor for the fever they did not prescribe her anything. They told her to buy something at the pharmacy because she doesn't have health insurance.

Let's raise awareness, let's fight then. When it comes to health care, we have no options. We are unprotected. Unfortunately we are going through a very difficult part of our lives, where you feel something and it is easier to take something yourself at home and make the problem worse without knowing what kind of problems are coming because you can't go to the doctor. You can't go to an emergency because you will get a bigger problem that will last up to 6 years

paying a bill. As part of the Semilla Collective, we see how hard it is. We are here and we are

going to fight.

I support expanding HUSKY to all, and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Going forward, I ask the committee to work to open access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

Maria Suero